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# THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

## ARTISTIC DRAPERIES.

By H. M. POOLE.



IN no respect has there been a greater change in housefurnishing than in the increased use of draperies. Ideally considered, they add greatly to the beauty of home, but like all artistic accessories, draperies are both overdone and underdone. What epithet excepting the last can be applied to those coarse, raw, staring monstrosities of so-called Turcomans having dados in imitations of natural flowers a foot or so in diameter? Or those stringy flimsy materials which are veritable and elongated dusting-rags? For curtain drapery thin hangings are permissible but they should be taken down as soon as they have degenerated into wisps and strings. Without care when used over windows which are left open a good share of the time,—as windows ought to be whenever the weather will allow—such curtains very soon lose their starch and hang limp and useless. Among other materials are that charming fabric the real Madras cloth, and a good quality of Scrim. The imitation Madras ought to be hung only for sash curtains or for windows seldom opened.

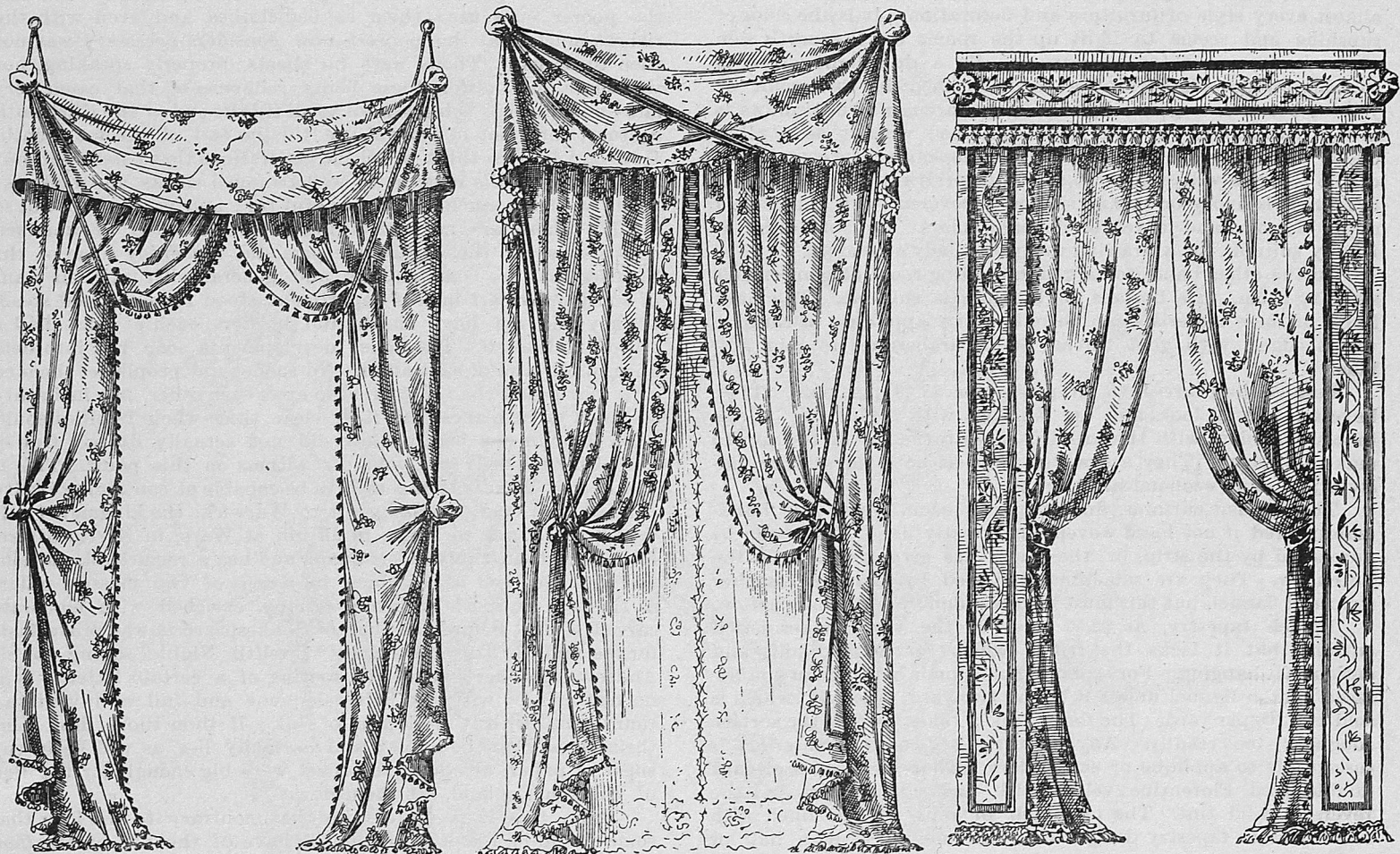
Those sash curtains so popular in city houses should be used in the city only, or, if in the country over exposed bed-room

the name of "renaissance drapery," and that Nottingham lace which is the despair of the beauty-loving housekeeper.

Every reader is aware that curtain cornices are out of date. Occasionally they are found in the country, tarnished and hideous. Poles, that may be had for twenty cents, are far better, but when even the twenty cents are lacking, old brown sticks stained to imitate cherry or walnut are superior to cornices. Plain brass poles with rings and brackets are sold from fifty cents a piece upwards. The rings run over them more smoothly than over wood, but the latter are more harmonious in effect than brass, except when used in a room finished or furnished with much gilding. Those showing surfaces resembling fish scales, alligator skins on basket-work, are not sanctioned by good taste.

Curtain draperies are supposed to hang in straight soft folds, and are not caught back in the old style. Practically, it is often convenient to tie back a curtain. A very lofty window needs drapery across the top, and the lambrequin, no longer in vogue, is too stiff and conventional to satisfy modern requirements. The curtain chain, when employed in this way, is made of brass and gilt, and fashioned in the shape of small figures strung upon metallic bands, or of balls, acorns, cones, and shells. The draping requires a graceful touch which may be natural or skilled, but in either case is unusual.

Unless the window is very broad, as well as high, one double breadth is less stiff than two curtains of narrower width. In that case have a wide border across the side next the casing, which must be repeated in the valance turned over the top and



RECENT FRENCH DRAPERIES.

windows or windows overlooking disagreeable objects. It is a sin to shut out the sunshine and the veins of the blue sky and the changeable landscape by any material however thin. For sash curtains, in addition to the fabrics named, are cheese cloth and the old-fashioned cottage drapery. These can be run on ribbons of the predominant color with an edge of lace, at an expense of not exceeding thirty cents the window. They are frequently tied back leaving a diamond shape space in the center.

Madras cloth is the most effective medium priced drapery and may be purchased as low as \$3.50 for the window, though the better qualities range as high as eight times that amount. They are always woven with soft colors in figures and the pattern is cut away between them on the back. The stamped material is the imitation. Better than this last is the scrim or etamine, both plain and lace-striped, costing from twelve to eighty cents per yard. It almost always comes double-width.

There is also curtain material in India mull and India silk, Java stripes and raw silks, unbleached muslin, cheese cloth, white and colored Canton flannels, momie cloth, silesia, French tapestry, striped Algerienne, flax and silk velours, Bolton sheeting, felt, burlaps or upholsterers' bagging, double-faced Florentine velvet, and last of all the old style brocade; which figures under

fastened with it into rings. A narrow cord or fringe or rich galoon may then finish that edge which falls over the window. The effect will be made finer than when the edges are reversed, the broad border thus enhancing the outline of the window. The looping should be very high, about two-thirds of the distance of the floor to the top of the casing. These should be soft easy folds from the top, which extends entirely across, to the retaining cord or chain. From thence to the floor the folds are perfectly straight. The same kind of draping is suitable for a portiere between two rooms which are always to be used as one. To make a double drapery and loop one side lower than the other, is to follow the fashion of a hotel parlor or steamer saloon.

A charming drapery of thin material, like Madras muslin, when used over a high window, especially when the lower sash is to be frequently thrown open, is arranged in the following manner: take at least four yards of the material and make a wide hem on either end, throw one end over one side of the pole and the other over the opposite side, leaving a loose fold between to hang nearly to the top of the lower sash. The ends may be adjusted long or short, according to taste. The drapery is fastened to the pole by concealed pins.

One word more concerning Nottingham lace. Where from



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motives of economy it must be used, it can at least be deprived of that obnoxious, ghastly cold blue-white look, which is about as satisfactory as the color of skimmed milk, do them up in starch-water tinted with coffee to any depth desired, and then hang them over poles without looping. Only in this way are they tolerable.

The mistake of thinking that an artistic fabric is necessarily expensive is fast passing away, thanks to the more general study of the canons of art. Take for instance, Bolton sheeting which can be dyed in dull soft shades of red, olive, blue, or russet, though its original unbleached hue is good in itself. It is suitable for either window or door drapery, hanging as it does in graceful folds, and lending itself readily to different styles of ornamentation. The fabric may be embroidered, or the velvet frieze of the same shade may be embroidered, appliqued, or applied plainly or with the lower side edged with a row of small Turkish coins.

When embroidery is used the patterns ought never to be copies of natural objects but conventionalized fruits and flowers, arabesques or geometrical figures, things having a certain largeness of style and showing no fine, petty work. Let that be reserved for personal ornaments and table doilies. Here are needed such designs as fall into each other pleasingly and repeat the pattern, not those which are mutilated when caught into folds. For these reasons circles, ovals, crescents, scroll-work and the Greek key are deserved favorites. The lily and the pomegranate are desirable patterns.

In color draperies ought to show a darker shade of the wall color or contrast pleasingly with it in the case of window curtains. Thus soft yellow India or China silk is admirable with almost every style of furniture and decoration. It is the color of sunshine and seems to light up the rooms on the north side of the house as nothing else can do. So a dull light green is suitable for the windows of a room finished in rose color or yellow, because a green light sifting through the windows is always pleasant to the eye. But combined with it as a relief ought to be the dull pink of the apple blossom or the complexion of the inmates will suffer. One of the prettiest of all window draperies is ivory or cream silk well covered with bunches of apple blossoms and leaves in delicate colors. But, of course, it is only suitable for a drawing-room or a lady's boudoir.

On the other hand, for a general sitting-room or gentleman's smoking-room, jute burlaps or hanging is suitable. The dark forms of these materials can be relieved by appliques of carmine velvet edged with gold thread or by arabesques in gold and blue.

Besides these are Java draperies for \$7.50 per pair. They have an oriental look and are finished with braids and tassels in eastern colors with the tasseled edges turned over the top to make a valance. They are woven alike on both sides. The old-style jute is an economical hanging.

The Bagdad curtains, fine stripes in each, which are hand-embroidered if not hand-woven, are greatly liked. They can be purchased by the strip, or the strips are arranged to suit the purchaser. They are sometimes imitated by putting together stripes of flannel, but this must be nicely done to give satisfaction.

French tapestry, at \$2.50 to \$4.00 the yard, makes a rich curtain, but it lacks the fringe which serves to dignify and enrich that hanging. For economy, nothing is better than double-faced canton flannel unless it be the two-yard wide felt, which is sold at \$1.00 per yard. The former easily takes fire and the surface roughens too readily. Any of these self-colored materials is susceptible to applique or embroidery. There is also an elegant double-faced Florentine velvet with one side figured and the reverse a solid tint. The plain felt or reps may be lined with a cretonne in tapestry design when the hanging is in a hall or bedroom.

In all portions of the country having long summers it is wise to shake out heavy draperies and pack them away until fall. To replace them are such thinner fabrics as have been mentioned, and Algerienne draperies in mohair and silk. These show eastern colors and may be purchased at \$2.75 per pair. Turkey also sends cottage draperies in silk and cotton, as well as those bright cotton scarfs used by the Turks as turbans. These, which are one yard wide by four long are especially fitted for cheap window hangings for seaside or mountain bedrooms. Those who desire something better and can afford it have the entire hanging of stripes of India silk and inserting, each four or five inches wide, the whole finished with an edging of lace. But they lack unity and simplicity and are not to be regarded as examples of the best taste.

Blue and brown denim for common use have been so often described as to need no repetition. Brown and blue duck is much newer. The material is either fringed or finished with fine rows of gold seine twine sewed on with brown floss. It may be stamped in large arabesques, also, and embroidered in coarse linen floss or the design outlined with a large blue or yellow cord in couching stitch with the same colored silk. These hangings are suitable for the seaside.

### SOME HISTORICAL BEDSTEADS.

BY ALEX. H. JAPP.

IT is a very remarkable fact that more than five thousand years elapsed before mankind reached the idea of a "proper bed." Previous to that men and women, even those of highly civilised nations, were fain to content themselves with something in the nature of a couch merely raised above the ground, with a head-rest of wood or other material. This was the case in Greece and Rome; and though we have testimony through Mark Antony that the "Beds o' the East were soft," we have no reason to conclude that they were anything more than very improved versions of those of Greece and Rome, and certainly not in any way approaching the bed of modern days. Sir Gardner Wilkinson thinks that the ancient Egyptians usually slept on their day-couches, which were long and straight, sometimes with a back and sometimes with carving on the heads and feet of animals at the ends, made of bronze, of alabaster, of gold and ivory, of inlaid wood, and richly cushioned. When these were not in use mats replaced them, or low pallets made of palm-boughs, with a wooden pillow hollowed out for the head. In England something more like a sofa than anything else was the only sleeping place of our forefathers for centuries. When they went to bed, it could hardly be said that they "lay down." The sofa head prevented that. Then, even after bedsteads were invented, and no end of skill in decoration had been lavished upon them, the sleepers lay in bed without night dress, that article of luxury (however necessary and common now) not having then been thought of. The sleepers took off their clothes, and the poorer ones used them as bed-clothes, and even with the richest much that the poorest now considers necessary was not then to be had. There were no sheets, properly speaking, nor was there any bolster, these being refinements that came very late—not, indeed, being known at all till the end of the thirteenth century, and not in general use till the end of the fourteenth. How odd it is to think of all the generations that passed without having known the comfort of well-arranged sheets and bolsters! Truly we have much to be thankful for; and yet perhaps not so much. There are no such things on this earth as unmixed advantages. If the earlier sleepers did not enjoy some of the luxuries that are commonplace and general with us, their want of constructive art in this department stood them in good stead. If they did not have sheets and bolsters, each at least had a "bed" to himself. The latter developments soon ran into defiance of all laws of sanitation. No sooner did people get the idea of a four-poster than they tried to excel each other, not in beauty so much as in bigness, till it is clear that whole families could have slept in one bed, if they did not actually do so. One of our historical beds is a valuable witness on this point. This is the Bed of Ware. It was said to be capable of containing twelve persons, and tradition assigns it to Warwick, the kingmaker. It is still preserved, we learn, in an inn at Ware, in Hertfordshire. It is more than twelve feet square, and has a remarkably curious and richly-carved back, which by means of two massive pillars at the foot supports a heavy canopy, enriched with elaborate carved work. Before the time of Shakespeare it was proverbial, for we find Sir Toby Belch, in "Twelfth Night," saying to Sir Andrew Aguecheek about the writing of a certain letter, "It is no matter how witty, so it be eloquent and full of invention; taunt him with the license of ink; if thou thoust him some thrice it will not be amiss; and as many lies as will lie in thy sheet of paper, although the sheet were big enough for the Bed of Ware in England, set them down."

From this it is quite clear that, contrary to the idea that some would-be historical fictionists have of the use of the *thou* in the English common speech of that time, the "thou," whether used systematically in other ways or not, was used as in the German "Du bist ein Knarr!" as a term of insult or offense. For this we have Shakespeare's clear authority here. And we have Shakespeare's clear authority in another matter bearing more directly on our proper subject; for by his will he made a bed historical, and no end of difficulty and dispute have arisen regarding it and his motives in reference to it. To his wife, Anne Hathaway, he devised his "second-best bed" with all due formality. At first one has some vague fear that by this, in spite of apologies, Shakespeare did her no great honor. But a slight glance at antiquities may help to dissipate that idea. Beds had become the chief domestic glories of the time. They were even thus specifically named in the wills of sovereigns and of the chief nobility. Anne, Countess of Pembroke, in 1387, bequeathed to her daughter a Bed, "with the furniture of her father's arms." In 1363 Lord Ferrers left to his son his "green Bed with the arms thereon," and to his daughter his "white Bed and all the furniture, with the arms of Ferrers and Ufford thereon." Edward the Black Prince bequeathed to his Confessor, Sir Robert de Walsham, a large Bed of red camora, with his arms embroidered at each corner, while to another friend he left another Bed of camora, flowered with blue eagles; and in 1385 his widow gave